

Less than 0.5% of Tested Students and Staff Were Positive for COVID-19 Since Start of School

Since August 30, ~70K tests have been administered to public school students and staff through the centralized COVID-19 school-based testing program. Only 291 tested positive.

In April 2021, Mayor Bowser announced that all schools in Washington, DC would open for in-person learning for SY2021-22 because students thrive in the classroom. Reopening schools has been one of the greatest efforts our city's education system has faced, and a strong and safe start to the school year was essential to build collective confidence.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends offering COVID-19 testing in schools to quickly identify cases and to reduce the risk and spread of COVID-19. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), in partnership with DC Health, is supporting the COVID-19 school-based testing program for both asymptomatic and symptomatic students and staff.

Nearly 70,000 Tests Collected Across 32 Charter LEAs and DCPS

Schools have the option to participate in the OSSE centralized contract through ShieldT3 or to apply for a sub-grant and contract with their own vendor. As of November 17, all DCPS schools and 32 public charter LEAs have opted to participate in the OSSE centralized testing program, representing 66% of the SY2021-22 public school student population.

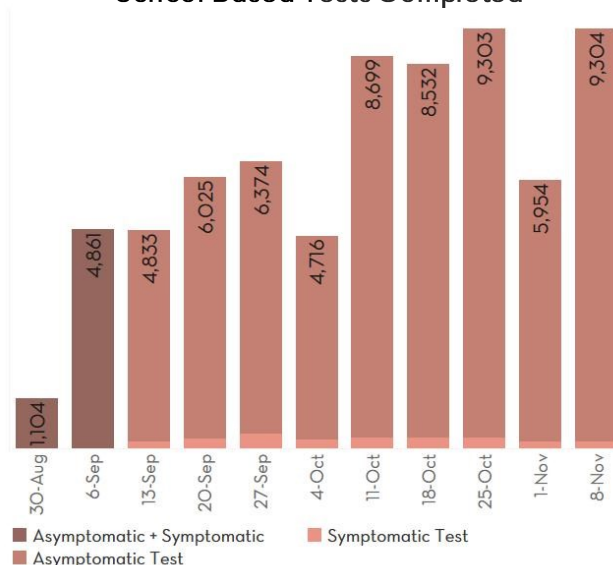
By November 1, each participating school must have conducted weekly asymptomatic testing of at least 15% of its students that were attending school in-person. By November 15,

participating schools must be testing 20%. A sample of unvaccinated, consenting staff are also tested each week at participating schools.

Since the start of the program on August 30 and until the latest data available from the week of November 8, 69,705 tests have been collected. Of these, 61,799 have been asymptomatic tests and 1,941 have been symptomatic. An additional 5,965 tests were completed in the first two weeks and were reported together. See Figure 1 for more details.

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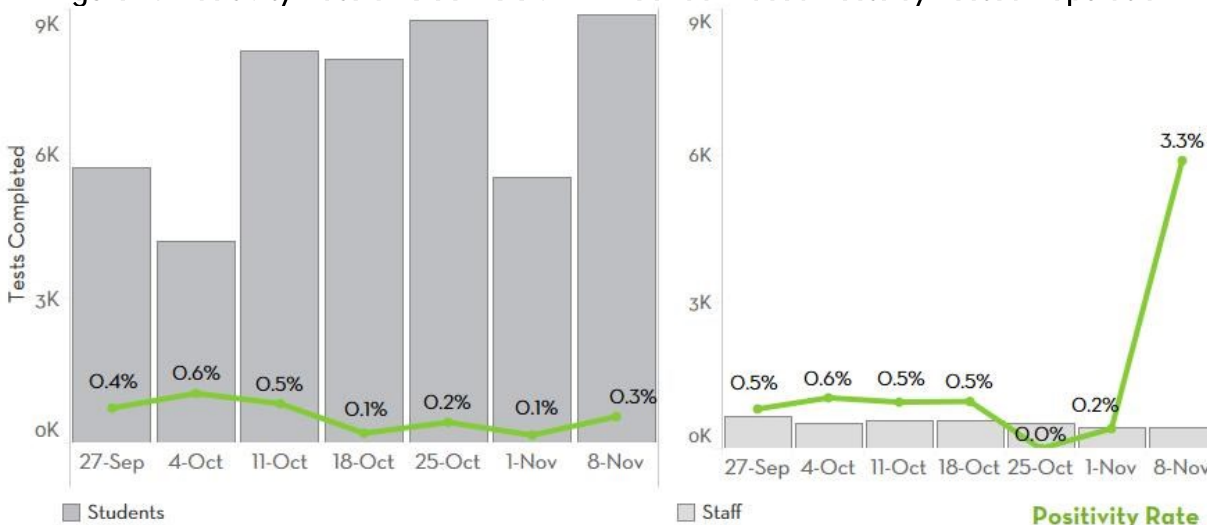
Figure 1: Number of OSSE COVID-19 School-Based Tests Completed



Source: OSSE COVID-19 school-based testing program

Notes: Test type was reported together for weeks of Aug. 30 and Sept. 6. Aug. 30 was the first week of school for DCPS, and the testing program began on a rolling basis on Sept. 2. No school for DCPS students and therefore no testing on Oct. 7-8 (week of Oct. 4), Nov. 2 and Nov. 5 (week of Nov. 1), and Nov. 11 (week of Nov. 8).

Figure 2: Positivity Rate of OSSE COVID-19 School-Based Tests by Tested Population



Source: OSSE COVID-19 school-based testing program. Data was not disaggregated prior to the week of September 27, so is not shown.

Notes: The type of test was reported together for the weeks of Aug. 30 and Sept. 6. Aug. 30 was the first week of school for DCPS, and the testing program began on a rolling basis Sept. 2. There was no school for DCPS students and therefore no testing on Oct. 7-8 (week of Oct. 4), Nov. 2 and Nov. 5 (week of Nov. 1), and Nov. 11 (week of Nov. 8).

Less than 0.5% Have Tested Positive

Of the 69,705 tests that have been collected since August 30, only 291 have returned positive for COVID-19, translating to a 0.42% positivity rate among our students and staff. The positivity rate within the asymptomatic testing program is even lower at 0.34%.

Because staff testing is only conducted for consenting unvaccinated staff, a significantly larger number of student tests are collected each week. Students versus staff testing was not reported separately until the week of September 27. Since then, the number of students tested each week has increased from 5,709 students to 8,877 students the week of November 8 while the number of staff tested has ranged from 427 to 665 tested.

The positivity rate for combined students and staff peaked at approximately 1% the week of September 13 (data not disaggregated and is not shown in Figure 1). The positivity rate among students tested has steadily declined, reaching a low of 0.1% the week of November 1. The staff positivity rate hit a low of 0% the week of October 25 and a high of 3.3% the week of November 8 (14 confirmed cases).

Differences by Sector

By sector, half of the public charter LEAs have chosen to participate in the centralized testing option (the rest have their own programs). The positivity rate for both DCPS and public charter schools peaked at approximately 1% the week of September 13. Since, the positivity rate in DCPS schools has steadily declined and fewer than 25 students have been confirmed positive each week across all DCPS schools. The positivity rate among public charter school students tested reached a low of 0.2% the week of November 1.

ShieldT3 Testing Program

The ShieldT3 asymptomatic test is a saliva-based PCR test. Students and staff complete the tests themselves and tests are pooled to allow for individual confirmatory testing. The ShieldT3 symptomatic test is completed by test observers or LEA staff that have been trained to supervise collection of test samples. For more information on the OSSE centralized COVID-19 school-based testing program, visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

Feedback: Email Edsight.DME@dc.gov